



USAID
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PAKISTAN

CASE STUDY

Carpenters Ply Trade, Build Goodwill

Carpenters in earthquake zone get new tools, help local families

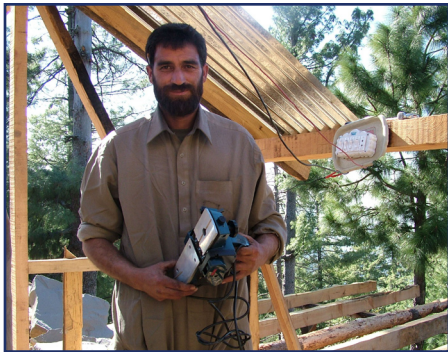


Photo: USAID/Kaukab Jhumra Smith

Mohammed Ayaz, from Malot, a town in northeastern Pakistan, received power tools to restart his carpentry business. In return, he is constructing the shelter behind him for a widow who cannot build it herself.

“We can do better quality work with these tools,” said Mohammed Anwar, a carpenter in Malot, comparing the new power tools he received from USAID to his old manual equipment.

Telling Our Story
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<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Challenge

More than 10,000 families in Bagh, a district in Pakistani-administered Kashmir, were left homeless by the devastating October 2005 earthquake. To help them survive the harsh winter, USAID distributed building supplies such as corrugated iron sheets, plastic, and nails to build shelters. But 1,300 families headed by widows, disabled people, or elderly people still found themselves in trouble — without an adult male strong enough to build a shelter, these families were unable to use the materials well. They could not afford to hire labor either. At the same time, most local carpenters were out of work — their woodworking tools had been destroyed or buried. The carpenters could not afford to replace their equipment, and were likely to lose their businesses and livelihoods.

Initiative

To help vulnerable families build shelters and boost the local economy, USAID provided new woodworking tools to 85 carpenters, who each promised to construct earthquake-resistant shelters for 12 needy families. The tool sets, valued at \$1,000 each, included circular saws, planers, drills, and other durable equipment. The carpenters signed an agreement in the presence of a village representative acknowledging they would return the tools if they did not fulfill their promise. Families in need chose an approved carpenter from their area and picked one of two shelter designs. In addition, the carpenters earned \$33 per shelter built. After construction, a quality control inspector reviewed each shelter for compliance with earthquake safety specifications. If a shelter did not comply with the standards, the carpenter forfeited his earnings.

Results

“This is very good help for us,” said Mohammed Ayaz, a carpenter in Malot who had lost all his equipment in the quake. A village elder in Malot, Mohammed Aftab, said the tool program taught tradesmen to build better structures with safer designs. Most importantly, the 1,300 vulnerable households survived the winter in their new shelters, which kept them warm in the winter and will keep them safe from future earthquakes.